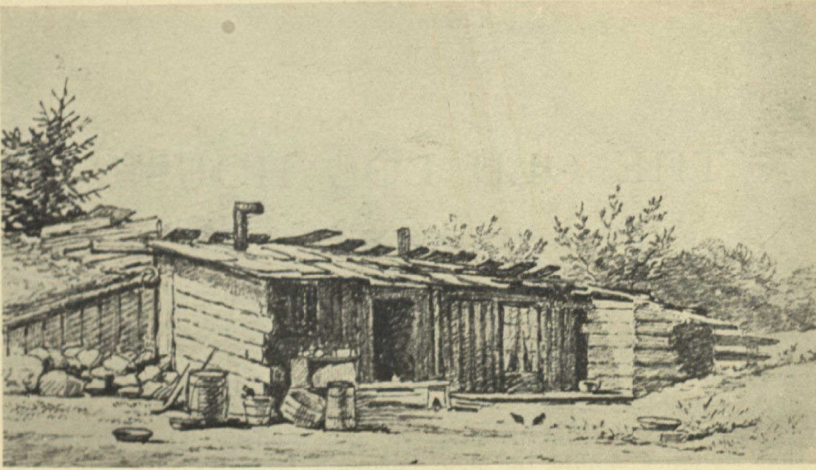




A LOG SHANTY WITH LEAN-TO
From a pencil sketch made by Harlow White in 1872

quick, sliding motion. Down through the gloom shoots a point of flame, but the punk does not ignite. He strikes again, but misses fire. A third time he tries, and then the boy sees a fine spiral of smoke rise above the punk. Bending closer, the old man blows his breath upon the spot that has ignited, and soon a flame appears. The flame increases and bites into the dead branches laid for its feasting. It roars and snaps, and these sounds of burning take the place of the spinning-wheel's weird wail. It has a cheery sound, and it sends forth a pleasant, flickering glow. But that is not enough, for the old woman takes down a candle from the dresser-head and lights it at the fire. She sets it in the centre of the table, and begins to lay out the things for supper. She invites the boy to sup with them, but he must run across the road and ask permission.

It is quite dark outside now, and few things sound above the quiet of the village. But blackbirds chatter in the poplars, and someone is making a creaking noise with a pump. Very likely it is the shoemaker; he usually goes out at this hour to get water to

soak leather in over night. His is one of the few pumps in the village; most of the people go to the common spring near the mill.

The boy obtains permission to remain for supper with the old couple. He comes rushing back from his own home, and just as he is crossing the road he notices in the dusk a small group standing a few yards away. Curiosity causes him to stop and join them. The old mail-carrier has arrived, much later than usual, and as it promises to be a pitch black night he is borrowing a lantern from the teamster who lives in the house that used to be a tavern. The lantern is large and square, and on one side there is a door that opens. The boy sees the mail-carrier take off his dog-skin mittens, hold the lantern up level with his face, open the door and set a candle within. Then the carpenter and the doctor each strike a match, and when the carpenter's fails, the doctor thrusts his forward and lights the candle.

The flame inside now casts a pleasant glow upon the faces of the group: and, to this day, after forty years, the boy still visualizes each member—